Faculty of Computer Science and Technology
Meeting of the Tripos Management Committee

Monday 25 November at 14:00 via Zoom
https://cam-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/84160240831?pwd=aadjleynzlFnylxqgoofsj8QTZEudT.1

AGENDA

Members

Prof Robert Harle (*Chair; Director, undergraduate teaching*) (RKH) ✓
Aidan Bishop (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (AB) ✓
Prof Paula Buttery (*Deputy HoD)* (PB) ✓
Dean Dodds (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration*) (DD) ✓
Lise Gough (*Postgraduate Education Manager*) (LG) X
Dr Tobias Grosser (*Deputy Director, IB undergraduate teaching)* (TG) X
Dr Carl Henrik Ek (*Advisor*) (CHE) X
Dr Sean Holden (*Chair of Examiners)* (SBH) ✓
Dr Martin Kleppmann (*Deputy Director, Part II undergraduate teaching)* (MK) ✓
Dr Roman Kolcun (*Advisor*) (RK) ✓
Prof Anil Madhavapeddy (*Deputy Director, IA undergraduate teaching*) (AVSM) X
Caroline Stewart (*Departmental Secretary)* (CS) ✓
Becky Straw (*Undergraduate Teaching Administration Manager)* (BS) ✓
Joy Rook (Postgraduate Programme Coordinator) (JR) ✓

1	**Apologies for Absence**

Carl Henrik Ek.

2	**Notification of AoB**

CS wished to discuss the teaching review.

RKH wished to discuss student feedback from Data Science.

3	**Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 14 October 2024**

Approved.

4	**Action from the meeting of 14 October 2024**

Completed actions from the last meeting can be found in the document 'completed TMC actions'

4.1   AVSM will try to find someone to cover Algorithms for next year. (**Action: AVSM**)

RKH had not received an update. AVSM was confident someone could be found, however RKH believed the theory group was overloaded.

4.2   Use of project checkers: MK will draft a policy based on these comments, for approval at the next meeting. (**Action: MK**).

5	**Other matters arising**

6	**General Teaching Matters**

6.1   Part II Project supervision policy proposal
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ypjg7mLOd6m_k9Jc8VCyMbx7CAMDBm2H_-J-kIfxE1Q/edit?tab=t.0
MK spoke about streamlining proposals such as getting rid of checkers, which would require clarifying the role of UTO markers and renaming them to UTO supervisors. Setting a deadline for submitting proposals and the requirement that the proposal is signed off by both the UTO and DOS.

Simplifying the project proposal submission process. It currently has three phases which could be reduced to one.

In the absence of checkers, the mid-way progress check would become the responsibility of the UTO supervisor.

Discussion regarding who should be eligible to be UTO supervisors. Currently UTOs, Affiliated Lecturers or recently retired UTOs are eligible and TMC may also be able to approve individuals on an ad hoc basis. RKH explained that some fellows didn't understand projects and didn't supervise particularly well. In the past a lot of people had informally been given positions so this year more vetting will be done.

RKH asked the group what they would like to do with non-UTOs. MK proposed that our own UTOs should automatically be eligible and TMC can approve anyone else as a lot of fellows are very experience but don't have an official position, it would be foolish not to include them. Additionally, MK proposed pairing any first time UTO with an experience UTO.

MK did not propose any large changes to the marking process, although did suggest incorporating some of Jamie's proposals such as the originality statements. MK and BS will meet to discuss **(Action: MK & BS)**.

MK believed the project guidance on the website should be updated as it is currently out of date, referring to computing systems which no longer exist. MK found that all proposals he viewed as a checker were weak on evaluation and wished to give students more guidance on this and for different types of projects. Noticed reoccurring problems with project proposals, suggested a template to give students more structure. MK will draft this while discussing with different people from Wednesday and bring it back to TMC **(Action: MK)**.

RKH thanked MK and found this to be comprehensive. There were no objections, so this will move forward, RKH asked for the draft to be cleaned up , the sections on process to be extracted and changes made to the website **(Action: MK)**.

RKH will raise this during the Wednesday meeting **(Action: RKH)**.

6.2   Project stats
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IFjkg9mHsnroLGX7eNJwWUtzrbXk766HYEhfAh0e97I/edit?gid=797746072#gid=797746072
BS explained that the spreadsheet lists all of our UTOs and what they are doing. RKH elaborated that following the Wednesday meeting, people wished it would be freeform so they could help students in whatever way they felt appropriate. The current arrangement is, it is freeform and people can help however they like but it is monitored so examiners can see if people are overextending themselves and detrimentally impacting the students. We will wait and monitor.

MK agreed, treating people as adults and letting them decide. RKH believed in treating them as adults until they demonstrate they are not.

6.3   Sabbatical request: Neil Lawrence (Paper)
RKH wished to confirm that Carl Henrik Ek was happy to cover ADS.
RKH believed this was okay, will not block this.

7   **Tripos Review**

7.1   Review of proposed timetable
RKH asked if people were happy with the concept, that we would be including more and more compulsory things in part II.

One DoS had already suggested students were not adult enough and would just sleep through Tuesdays and Thursdays. MK disagreed and felt students could organise their schedules, RKH agreed.

MK felt the timetable at Cambridge was already quite regimented compared to European universities and that our students could cope.

No objections.

8   **Any Other Business**
CS explained that the Teaching Review is going to Faculty Board and the responsibility of filling in the survey sent by the university will come back to TMC. RKH explained the wider context of this, a central team had created a generic list of challenges and solutions to things happening across different triposes and wished to check if this applied to our tripos and how students felt about this.

RKH informed us that we may have a problem with Datascience. Damon asked someone to cover this course and the person is, apparently, unsatisfactory. Only 10% of students are attending, the rest are watching archival videos of Damon. RKH asked if TMC should take any action, considering there were only a few lectures remaining. CS felt that, as it was close to the end, we should collect feedback and nothing else. PB suggested we tell SSCoF that we will learn from this mistake.

RKH explained the situation, this lecturer was suggested as a replacement and the only alternative would have been to block Damon's sabbatical. PB suggested we ask for references from people first, RKH was doubtful of this, even within the department we would struggle to give references on the teaching of others.

RKH believed we should be more careful when asking people to cover. PB suggested a more formal introduction, outlining our expectation, RKH agreed. Ideally we would be able to cover all lectures internally but we are unable to do that. MK asked if we are teaching too much, or if certain lecturers were not helping, RKH believed lecturers were more interested in covering IB course than IA, but we can't force people to do things. MK suggested a point system like other departments but according to RKH there had been resistance to that as it is hard to assign value to each task.

RKH and BS will discuss and put together a draft for next year **(Action: RKH & BS)**.

Date of next meeting: 27 January 2024 2pm